

## CHILEAN PATAGONIA

*With both Chilean and Argentine Patagonia reports, we rely heavily on climbers to contact us as soon as they return in order to include their accounts in appropriate volumes of the Journal. This means we sometimes miss first-hand accounts. When possible, we include them in the following volume. We include here some first-hand accounts from the 1996-97 season that we included as notes in last year's Journal.*

*Cerro Timonel, First Ascent.* Our expedition was composed of Nicolas Boetsch, Alberto Gana, Giancarlo Guglielmetti, Felipe Howard, Pablo Osses and me, the leader. On our second try, a Chilean patrol vessel disgorged us at the very southern end of Hielo Patagonico Sur, an ice tongue in the Fiordo de las Montanas flanked by the Cordillera Riesco and Cordillera Sarmiento. Wind and constant rain were great obstacles during our 20-day (December, 1995) expedition. We managed to make the first ascent of an ice peak, P.1330m, which we christened Cerro Timonel ("The Helmsman"). Stormy weather forced us to cancel all other projects and we retreated painfully to Istmo Resi, then marched along the seashore to arrive in Puerto Natales.

CRISTIAN BURACCHIO, *Santiago*

*La Hoja, Bohemian Rhapsody, and Expeditions to the Pingo Valley, Clarification.* Between January 5 and February 6, 1996, Sven Bruchfeld (24) and Christian Oberli (24), both Chileans, made the first ascent of the east face of La Hoja in Pingo Valley, Torres del Paine National Park.

The route (5.10 A2, 650m, 14 pitches) was completed in nine climbing days over almost three weeks. Four hundred sixty meters of rope were fixed in seven climbing days and the summit was reached on the second attempt on February 2 in a 25-hour push. Regular to bad rock quality was found between pitches ten and 12. All the gear was taken off the wall (and out of the park), including fixed ropes. Only the gear necessary for rappelling safely down was left at the belays (belays remain well protected with bolts, rivets, pitons and/or nuts). La Hoja's east face is very well protected against the strong stormy Patagonian west winds, making climbing possible even during bad weather, which is why we named the route *Bohemian Rhapsody* after Queen's famous song, because "Any way the wind blows, doesn't really matter. . . to me." On the other hand, the route is in a shady corner of the wall because of a south-east facing pillar to the north of the route.

Our expedition was the second one to visit the Pingo Valley. One year earlier, a British team (Louise Thomas, Mike Turner, Martin Doyle and Ollie Sanders) made the first ascent to the east face of Cuerno Norte (*Fist Full of Dollars*, A3+, 800m). The third expedition to climb in the Pingo Valley (not the second, as stated in the 1997 AAJ, pp. 264-5) was that of Michael Pennings and Cameron Tague, who climbed *Vuelo del Condor* (IV 5.11 A1), a new route on Cuerno Oriental, and *Anduril* (IV 5.11 A1), on the east face of La Hoja, the second new route on the face.

Climbers who take this wonderful lifestyle-sport seriously are invited to contact me by email at coberli@ing.puc.cl with any further questions.

CHRISTIAN OBERLI, *Club Aleman Andino*

*Peineta, Durazos para Don Quijote, and First Canadian Ascent.* In early January, 1997, Guy Edwards and I (Canada) traveled to the Paine region of Chile for two months of some southern summer. On January 17, the skies cleared for long enough to lure us onto Peineta for a

probable new route on its southwest buttress that we dubbed *Durazos para Don Quijote* (IV 5.10+ C1). The ten-pitch route was established in one day with no fixed rope or bolts and only three points of clean aid. After another week of the most hideous weather I've ever witnessed, the barometer began to rise, so we escaped our fetid tent and climbed the *Monzino* route (IV 5.10) on the North Tower of Paine for the first Canadian ascent of the mountain.

Another three weeks passed with no climbing at all. Guy, deciding that he'd rather check out the beaches of Chile and their abundant wildlife than spend quality time with me at base camp, left all his gear to Steve Normandin, a friend from Canmore who was trekking. Steve and I immediately took advantage of some mediocre weather and began fixing on a new line we scoped out on the west face of the north summit of the North Tower. With five pitches fixed and only about four remaining to the summit, we received a perfect day after a week of gnarly storms only to find most of our rope shredded by the wind. With no gear or time remaining, we called it quits and descended to town for a long-awaited fiesta.

SEAN ISAAC, *unaffiliated*

\*The climbers were recipients of the John Lauchlan Award

*Patagonia, Traverse.* Carsten Birckhahn (Germany) and partners made a traverse from the Pacific to the Atlantic oceans across Patagonia in the spring of 1998. They started at the Pacific Ocean in Fiordo Calvo, then crossed the Hielo Continental Patagonico carrying their kayaks. They then traveled over the Perito Moreno Glacier, then crossed Lago Argentino in their kayaks. In April, they finished the traverse on the Argentine side in the Atlantic Ocean via the Santa Cruz River, having crossed all of Patagonia from west to east.

FACUNDO JOSE, *Club Andino Bariloche*

*North Tower, Spirito Libero.* On February 2, 1998, the team of Fabio Leoni and Elio Orlandi from Trento, Italy, put up a new route on the north spur of the North Tower of Paine. The route, *Spirito Libero* (V 5.11a, 500m), was put up in alpine style. They climbed the 12-pitch route in 18 hours, leaving their bivouac at 7 a.m., summiting at 8 p.m. and returning to their bivouac at 1 a.m. Fabio and Elio took advantage of the only day of good weather in one month at base camp. El Niño conditioned the expedition of the two Trento climbers as it did the majority of the teams in the Towers of Paine National Park. The wave of bad weather, with torrential rain, was particularly bad in the middle of February.

MARIO MAICA, *Italy*

*Torres del Diablo and The Bader Valley, Various Ascents.* On January 18, John Merriam, Dylan Taylor, Darrel Gschwendtner and I teamed up with Mark Slovak and Robert Bodrogi to visit the Torres del Diablo (a.k.a. Grupo La Paz). Five hours south of Puerto Natales by fishing boat, steep metamorphosed towers rise from glaciated terrain. Amazing couloirs separate one tower from another. Donini and Chouinard climbed one of the three in the late '80s via a north face route. Our attention was drawn by the soaring south faces. Unfortunately the weather and wind battered us for 13 days, at which point we had run out of food, sustained broken tent poles, ripped flies, and had headed down to the shore line with hopes for a boat. Mussels and seaweed nourished us for a few days until a friend arrived, late, with a fisherman, a boat, and, most importantly, bread, coffee and sugar.

In early February, after refueling in Puerto Natales, Dylan, Darrel, John and I hauled